**Gang boss badly beaten in prison**

**Beez king feels sting**

Sunday News

Last updated 23:48 22/11/2008



LAWRENCE SMITH

JOSH MASTERS

**Relevant offers**

KILLER Beez kingpin Josh Masters has been given a humiliating jailhouse beating as he awaits trial over allegedly being part of a drugs ring.

Masters also formerly a vice-president of the Tribesmen gang is understood to have been set upon at Auckland Prison at Paremoremo last month after allegedly "playing up" at his last appearance at Manukau District Court.

Police sources believe Masters' court outburst could have affected other inmates' ability to get bail and probably prompted the attack.

Most of the 44 Killer Beez and Tribesmen affiliates arrested with Masters in May have been released on electronic bail, largely due to court delays. The group's depositions hearings are still four months away.

But Masters who faces multiple charges of manufacturing and supplying P, money laundering, unlawful possession of firearms and committing a dangerous act with intent to injure and a few other senior members of the gangs are still locked up.

Sunday News understands Masters a wannabe rapper who sings about being "a real life gangster" and a "certified hustler" on the Colourway Records song Put Your Colours on had bruising to his face and body in last month's attack. He has since been separated from a group of inmates for his own safety.

The 30-year-old Masters hasn't made a complaint to police and no charges have been laid in relation to the beating. Sources have told Sunday News the once intimidating 117kg kickboxer from Otara is now a "shell of his former self".

"A few people have taken exception to him trying to throw his weight around because he just doesn't hold that mantle anymore," a source said.

Masters' former hulk-like physique is understood to be considerably deflated now.

"He's lost his muscles and got fat," a source said.

"And it's not doing anything for him psychologically either."

*Sunday News* understands the Tribesmen stripped Masters of his vice-presidency after he appeared on TV3's Campbell Live in February claiming his gang wasn't involved in drugs. Asked by John Campbell what his gang's attitude to P was, Masters said: "We're against it. We hate it."

The Tribesmen believed the interview would bring attention on their gang and it did. Less than three months later, police arrested Masters and 43 other Killer Beez and Tribesmen affiliates in a drugs sting involving 80 police officers and members of the Armed Offender Squad.

Police seized about $500,000 worth of P and cannabis, $20,000 cash, a large amount of stolen property, and motorcycles and cars under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

After the busts, Counties Manukau District CIB detective inspector John Tims said the Killer Beez and Tribesmen had been portrayed as "modern-day Robin Hoods" in the media, while he claimed, in reality they were "drug dealers".

"They have attempted to achieve status through music, videos and contact with the youth of our communities," Tims said.

"Based on our evidence through the operation (we believe) in simple terms they are drug dealers who are causing destruction and chaos in our community."

The prison assault isn't the first time Masters has been bashed. Sunday News understands Masters was attacked with a baseball bat on Waitangi Day (February 6) by opposition gang members who took exception to him wearing his Tribesmen patch.

"Witnesses who heard the bat strike his head said it sounded like that noise a softball makes when it gets hit ... that thud," another police source said. "I know he wasn't left a vegetable from that ... but it really had an effect on him."